

Dixon Springs Prisoners Donate Homegrown Produce to Food Pantry



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MARION -- A local prison camp is donating produce grown by inmates to a food pantry in need.

Officers from the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) Dixon Springs Impact Incarceration Program (IIP) brought food donations to the Shepherd's Closet pantry in Marion on Thursday.

The food is grown in a three-acre garden at the Dixon Springs Boot Camp. The correctional facility learned about the need at Shepherd's Closet from a story broadcast by WSIL-TV News 3 in July. The pantry is one of several organizations to which the boot camp donates when it has excess produce.

"IDOC believes in giving back to our communities and we provide the inmates that opportunity. It's something they may have never done prior to their incarceration," said Jason Henton, Unit Superintendent at Dixon Springs IIP.

"When these inmates plant the seeds and can harvest the produce, they see it going to different facilities such as this. It gets their minds behind the mission of the Department of Corrections and gives them a willingness to help others. In turn, that helps them in their rehabilitation and eventual reentry into society." Henton added.

Dixon Springs IIP will continue to donate to Shepherd's Closet throughout the growing season. Cissie Fosse, manager of the not-for-profit food pantry, says Wednesday's donations will go quickly during their semi-monthly handout.